

QUETTA VOICE

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Rana Sanaulah stops police from arresting Shahbaz Gill's driver



Hamza challenges SC order removing him as Punjab CM

COAS recognises deep-rooted ties between Pakistan, UK at Sandhurst passing-out parade

SANDHURST Chief of the Army Staff (COAS) General Qamar Javed Bajwa on Friday recognised the deep-rooted ties between Pakistan and the United Kingdom, expressing the hope that relations between the two countries would reach "historic heights" in the future.

The army chief made the remarks while attending the passing-out parade at the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst where he was the chief guest.

The Royal Military Academy Sandhurst (RMAS) is one of several military academies of the United Kingdom and is the British Army's initial officer training centre.

All British Army officers, including late-entry officers who were previously Warrant Officers, as well as other men and women from overseas, are trained at the academy. Sandhurst is the British Army equivalent of the Britannia Royal Naval College and the Royal Air Force College Cranwell.

Due to the pandemic, the army chief had not visited the academy over the last couple of years, but had been a regular visitor



each year since he took over as head of the army.

Today, the COAS began his address by saying that it was a "great honour and privilege" for him to be present during today's ceremony.

He congratulated the cadets and their families on successfully completing their training at the academy, saying, "You are part of one of the finest militaries in the world that has produced great military leaders".

"Two Pakistani cadets will also be graduating with you today and let me say that I am as proud of you as I am of them," he told the graduating cadets.

Gen Bajwa said that his presence at the academy today bore "testimony" to the "deep-rooted relationship" shared by Pakistan and UK "based on mutual respect and shared values". "Similarly, the bond between the two armed forces is uniquely special and has been kept alive over the years through close professional contact in training and other military activities," he remarked. The COAS, moving on to address the passing out cadets, highlighted

that there would be great responsibilities and expectations associated with them henceforth. "The journey ahead of you is both challenging and exciting. As you grow, the demand for professionalism will also increase," he said, pointing out that no one was born with professional knowledge rather "it has to be acquired with constant pursuit".

"Without it you can not achieve professional confidence which is the hallmark of successful military leadership," Gen Bajwa stated, adding that decision-making was also very important.

"You need to have the will to take decisions and accept full responsibility. That will require confidence and competence."

Gen Bajwa concluded his speech by wishing the cadets the best for their future and hoped that they would serve their countries with honour, dignity and pride. After the speech, he also inspected the cadets and chatted with them.

The COAS had arrived in UK early on Thursday morning. During his visit, he is also expected to call on the military leadership of the UK. Web Desk

Buledi lashes out at Gill in presence of PTI ministers

Staff Reporter

QUETTA: Former senior minister of Balochistan, Mir Zahoor Buledi has lashed out at Shehbaz Gill in presence of Pakistan Tehrik e Insaaf (PTI) ministers during the provincial assembly session on Friday evening.

"I strongly condemn Gill's remarks about national institutions", Mr. Buledi who belongs to the ruling Balochistan Awami Party (BAP) told the house. The session of the Balochistan Assembly resumed here with acting speaker Sardar Bahar Musakhail in the chair. BAP and PTI are in an



alliance in Balochistan. Although, the latter has parted ways with the former in the federal government. Members from the treasury and opposition spoke about issues relating to Balochistan and underlined the need for a solution.

"None can tolerate PTI

leader's statement". "None can tolerate PTI leader's statement", the former senior minister of Balochistan said. As he stood at his seat, the PTI ministers including Naseebullah Marri and Mobeen Khilji left the house.

However, Mr. Marri

again appeared in the house and wanted to respond to Mr. Buledi's remarks about his party's leader. Buledi pointed out the lack of quorum and the chair subsequently adjourned the session as most members from the treasury and opposition were absent from the session.

BNP lawmaker condemns police raids in Sariab

Balochistan National Party (BNP) lawmaker, Ahmed Nawaz Baloch strongly condemned police raids in the Sariab area of Quetta and demanded of the government to take notice of this. He said without ful-

filling any legal requirement, police were conducting raids in his constituency.

"If someone had committed any crime, they should be produced before the court of law", Mr. Baloch demanded. He said police and law enforcement agencies should follow the rules while conducting raids.

Pashtoonkhwā Milli Awami Party (PKMAP) member, Nasrullah Khan Zairai and BNP's Akhtar Hussain Langove also asked the chair to allow them to speak on issues relating to Balochistan. However, the chair asked them to speak in another session.

Quetta Karachi highway closed for heavy traffic after floods

Manan Mandokhail

Quetta Karachi highway was blocked for heavy traffic on Friday as flash floods unleashed by heavy rainfall swept away Lunda bridge in the Uthal area of Lasbela district. The fresh spell of monsoon has wreaked havoc in the Lasbela, Killa Abdullah and Killa Saifullah districts of Balochistan.

"We have stopped heavy traffic on Quetta Karachi highway", Dawood Khilji, the Commissioner Kalat Division said in a statement. He said the highway was opened for small vehicles. Mr. Khilji however cautioned the people to avoid unnecessary traveling on the highway, which links Balochistan with Sindh province.

Flash floods completely swept away Lunda bridge at Uthal tehsil of Lasbela district. However, no human loss was



reported as a result of the damage.

The death toll rose to 182 in Quetta and other parts of Balochistan because of floods and heavy rainfall. The dead include 56 children, 45 women and 81 men, the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) sources told Daily Quetta Voice.

The floods have also left around 1000 people injured across Balochistan.

Pakistan Army should not be made 'controversial', says President Alvi

President Dr Arif Alvi on Friday called upon political parties to refrain from bringing the Pakistan Army into political discourse, saying the military was the guarantor of national security and "it should not be made controversial".

The president's statement comes days after PTI leader Shehbaz Gill was arrested by the Islamabad police on charges of sedition and inciting the public against the state institutions, following his controversial remarks about the armed forces on a news channel.

Speaking to reporters at the Governor House in Lahore today, Dr Alvi said that there was a need to initiate a "consultative process" to bring all the important stakeholders of the country to a negotiation table.

"However, the constitutional role of a president does not allow him to officially reach out to the stakeholders."

Dr Alvi stated that it was the primary responsibility of the government, opposition, and all the other relevant institutions to deliberate upon defusing the ris-



ing polarisation in the country.

He said political parties and stakeholders needed to sit together and chalk out a way forward, especially with regard to holding free and fair elections and developing a charter of economy that could help ease out the current political and economic situation.

"Everyone will have to think about the situation we are currently embroiled into."

The president also offered to mediate between Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and PTI Chairman Imran Khan "for the sake of the country".

"It will be my endeavor to reduce tensions between the two leaders and make the environment feasible for early elections."

Also read: No harm in appointing next army chief ahead of time: President Alvi

Dr Alvi stressed that a conflict between the federal government and provinces was unfavourable for the country, stressing that it should be settled.

He added that he had been "reminding all the stakeholders that the things are not right".

The president went on to say that he had also been informing Imran about the management issues in Pakistan, adding that "he had his own viewpoint over the matter."

He also stressed that stakeholders within Pakistan should only be involved in hammering out issues confronting the country without any involvement of any foreign persons or a country.

During the talk today, the president insisted that he had a very cordial relationship with the incumbent government, saying he accorded timely approval to

all summaries sent by PM Shehbaz, except for four which were delayed.

He also revealed that he held more discussions with the incumbent prime minister as compared to Imran.

Separately, the president highlighted corruption as "a major reason for the backwardness of any country".

"One of the best ways to counter corruption is to make all financial transactions through formal banking channels, especially when it comes to political parties while receiving and managing donations," he suggested.

Dr Alvi opined that 90 per cent of social media was "good" as "it provides huge chunk of information and we should learn to deal with the remaining 10pc by filtering out fake news and hearsay".

The president said he was the main proponent of electronic voting machines since long even during the governments of the PPP and the PML-N.

"It was me who convinced the PTI for the use of technology during elections. Web Desk

"The sanctity of the house should be taken into account during the raid," says Rana Sanaulah.

Interior Minister Rana Sanaulah prevented the inspector-general (IG) of Islamabad Police from raiding Bani Gala to arrest PTI leader Shehbaz Gill's driver.

PTI senior leader and party chairperson Imran Khan's aide Gill was taken into custody for inciting the public against state institutions, a spokesperson of the Islamabad police said on August 9. Sources privy to the matter said that the interior minister contacted IG Dr Akbar Nasir to get the details related to Gill's case. Sanaulah stopped the inspector-general from arresting Gill's driver, said the sources. He also expressed his displeasure over the arrest of the driver's wife.

On Thursday, the police took the wife of Gill's driver in custody after they raided the latter's residence to recover the PTI leader's mobile phone for investigation in the sedition case being pursued against him.

IG Nasir said that the driver is in Bani Gala and a raid needs to be carried out to arrest him. To this, Sanaulah said that the residents of Bani Gala should be taken into confidence regarding the driver.

The PML-N leader directed the inspector-general in case of any non-cooperation, adding that permission should be taken before the raid.

"The sanctity of the house should be taken into account during the raid, and the law should be strictly followed while arresting the driver and collecting the evidence," he added. Web Desk

Hamza challenges SC order removing him as Punjab CM

ISLAMABAD: Former chief minister Punjab Hamza Shahbaz on Friday challenged the Supreme Court order which set aside the Punjab Assembly deputy speaker's ruling which discarded ten votes of the Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid (PML-Q), thus leading to Hamza's victory as the provincial chief executive. Hamza, through Mansoor Awan, filed a review petition in the apex court against the July 26 order which thwarted former deputy speaker Dost Mohammad Mazari's decision and declared Pervez Elahi as the new CM of the country's political heartland.

The PML-N leader prayed that a full court be constituted to decide the matters involving the interpretation and application of Article 63A of the Constitution in this regard, as well as other connected matters and that they are heard together by the full court or at least a 12-member bench. The

review petition submitted that without "prejudice, the order, by holding that directions of the Parliamentary Party saps any role of the Party/Party Head is binding", contradicted the apex court's ruling dated May 17, 2022, on Article 63A given in Presidential Reference No. 1 of 2022 wherein the SC extended the right of a political party under Article 17(2) to Article 63A, and arrived "at the conclusion that a vote contrary to the party policy is to be disregarded and not counted". It further maintained that the opinion of the SC in the presidential reference was contrary to the letter of Article 63A and that votes polled contrary to the directions could not be disregarded. "The Petitioner further submits that the opinion of this Honourable Court in Presidential Reference No. 1 amounts to rewriting the Constitution, which is impermissible. Web Desk

Arshad Nadeem bags gold medal for Pakistan at Islamic Solidarity Games

KARACHI: Arshad Nadeem Friday bagged a gold medal for Pakistan at the 2022 Islamic Solidarity Games in Konya, Turkey with a games record throw of 88.55m — his second gold medal in less than a week.

Arshad was in a commanding position since the start of his event on Friday. In his first attempt,

Nadeem was able to throw the javelin at a distance of 79.40 metres, followed by 88.55 metres, 75.50 metres, 82.40 metres, and 83.33 metres.

The 88.55m throw was his best and also a new record for the Islamic Solidarity Games.

Following his win, Nadeem went to the stands where he was greeted by



Pakistani fans. Officials of the Pakistan

Olympic Association (POA), Pakistan Sports Board (PSB), and Athletics Federation of Pakistan (AFP) were also there to cheer for the champion athlete. Last week, the athlete made the nation proud as he bagged a gold medal during the javelin throw competition at the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham. Web Desk

BGC contributing US\$ 150,000 for flood affectees in Balochistan

News Desk

QUETTA: Barrick Gold Corporation (NYSE: GOLD)(TSX: ABX) is contributing US\$150,000 to Balochistan's Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) to support its relief efforts in the wake of unprecedented floods in the region. Remote communities in the province were hardest hit by the heavy monsoon rains which killed more than 500 people in Pakistan.

In a phone call today with the province's chief minister, Abdul Qudus Bizenjo, Barrick President and Chief Executive Mark Bristow expressed the company's condolences on the loss of life and suffering inflicted on the people of Balochistan.

He said the contribution to the emergency fund was a demonstration of the spirit of partnership in which Barrick, Balochistan and Pakistan had embarked on the reconstitution and restart of the Reko Diq project, which holds one of the world's largest undeveloped copper-gold deposits. Balochistan will have a 25% fully funded share in the project (10% free car-



ried and 15% to be funded by the federal government). Pakistani state-owned enterprises will hold another 25% and Barrick, with 50%, will operate the mine.

"Balochistan will benefit enormously from its stake in the mine. Even before construction starts, once the legalization process has been completed and the project reconstituted, we will start implementing social development programs representing an estimated investment of US\$70 million over the construction period. In addition, Reko Diq will advance royalties of up to US\$5 million in the first year, up to US\$7.5 million in the second and up to US\$10 million thereafter until construction starts," Bristow said.

During peak construction, the project is expected to employ approximately 7,500 people and once in production, it will create 4,000 full-time jobs. Its policy of local procurement will stimulate the development of a robust local economy. "Reko Diq has an estimated life of at least 40 years, so it will be generating substantial benefits for its Balochistan stakeholders for generations to come," Bristow said.

QUETTA VOICE

Editor Asim Khan

Torrential rain exposed drainage system in Quetta

Torrential rains badly exposed the drainage system in Quetta, the capital of Balochistan province. Heavy rainfall brought joy to the people living in posh areas of the city, whereas, woes to people living in poor neighborhoods and marginalized areas. A heartbreaking video of two teenage boys being swept away in the rainwater in Quetta's Sariab Road area was widely shared on social media. This really pained every sane person.

Hundreds of heartbreaking images of rain survivors were shared on social media outlets. This simply exposed the system in general and Quetta's drainage system in particular.

Rains-related incidents claim 7 lives
Rains-related incidents claimed seven precious human lives as per the statistics shared by the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA). Women and children were also among the dead. PDMA's media managers were sharing videos of their operations when people were facing the brunt of heavy rainfall in various parts of Balochistan.

Most streets and roads in poor neighborhoods of Quetta were inundated by the rainwater. It was not possible for the people to walk or drive on roads completely inundated.

Billions of rupees were spent but with no impact
Billions of rupees have been spent on the drainage, construction of roads, bridges, beautification and master plan of the city. However, one hour's heavy rainfall exposed all claims on behalf of the concerned departments.

Thousands of people have settled in the middle of nullahs/waterways over the years without the permission of the Metropolitan Corporation. MCQ appears to be a silent spectator when it comes to people constructing their houses on waterways.

PDMA has rather become a ghee and sugar distribution agency rather than coping with natural disasters in Balochistan.

Rainfall also exposed the traffic system
Rainfall has also exposed the traffic plan of the city. Nevertheless, the traffic policemen and Seargent deserve to be appreciated for ensuring the flow of traffic as streets and roads were giving an image of river flooding.

Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Qudus Bizenjo must have mercy on the provincial capital, which houses around 3 million people. Beyond political and personal interests, the provincial government should improve the drainage system, stop illegal settlements on waterways, ensure transparency in funds allocated for the construction of roads, bridges and etc.

Rainy water needs to be reserved to maintain the depleting water table in Quetta and other parts of Balochistan.

While we know about the level of political dichotomy in the country and the hatred that has crept up between political parties and their supporters with the use of the most abusive language at times on social media and even on television, we need to think about the other strains which are tearing our society apart.

Pakistan was once a society which was strongly united – during the 40s and 50s – and for the longest time, Muslims, Christians, Hindus, and other groups celebrated events together and maintained good relations. This somewhat ended under the General Ziaul Haq era when hatred seeped into schools, offices and other places, with discriminatory laws coming in against specific minority groups, and a general feeling of difference was created.

We see the impact of this hatred today. Children from minority groups attending missionary schools say that they do not have Muslim friends. This is a loss to them and the Muslim children who see less diversity in their society and little understanding of the groups they live with. At one charitable school run for children

from all communities, we have parents complaining that Muslim children should not be exposed to the slightly different Christian culture which they believe will have a negative effect on their children's morality.

Again, in the 1980s, such feelings were non-existent. All school-going children, regardless of their religion, would play together, and there was little sense of difference with birthday parties attended by both groups – Christians and Muslims – and there was no consciousness of cultural differences which did exist but were widely accepted. Today this has changed.

Even adult Christians say that they have few Muslim friends and generally socialize only within their community. Even though Pakistan's minority groups make up over two per cent of the population, such differences are even more unfortunate especially when we consider the fact that Christians and Muslims in Punjab live in close proximity to each other. In Sindh, Hindus and Muslims have enjoyed excellent relations in Tharparkar and other places where they lived together for the longest time.

However, this has started to change as many Hindu families are trying to flee the country which, in the words of its founder, was created for all religious groups and intended as a place where all of them were free to follow their religions and live in harmony. While we criticize India frequently for the terrible events that are taking place there and the genocide against Indian Muslims, we should also look within although we are fortunate that we have not yet reached the same hatred levels as are seen in India, with the government promoting anti-Muslim sentiments under the BJP.

But we still witness murder and lynching cases of various kinds, with Christians burnt to death on allegations of blasphemy without any trial, young Hindu girls forcibly converted and married off to far older Muslim men, and Sikhs made to feel uncomfortable and during Ramazan and Muharam asked not to lay out the feasts they traditionally offered to their Muslim brethren, and in case of violence in some areas, they are forced to pay 'jazia' and impelled to move out of the area or even leave the country.

This of course is Pakistan's loss and the loss of future generations. The more diversity we have the richer our country will be.

We must also recognize that the same kind of division exists on the basis of ethnicity with divisions between the Baloch and Punjabi communities and other groups. A ban placed on Balochi and Sindhi nationalist websites during the Musharraf era, which has continued into the present age, does not help matters. Even if we do not agree with their views, we should allow these people to express what they feel and how they think. If this is not allowed, the differences will keep growing as will hatred and the feeling of divide and difference.

India is a glaring example of what hatred can do. We have also seen the horrors of a hate-filled society in our country. We must act against the growing division and build a more united society. A few children attending some Christian schools where Muslims are also admitted say that they are encouraged to be friends with everyone, and anyone pointing out any kind of differences with another group is called

By Kamila Hyat

up for disciplinary action. This is commendable. These students say that they are generally able to make friends with Muslims as well as Christians, regardless of their religion. This is also true of other schools, but divisions and differences do exist. In some colleges, Hindu girls are isolated completely because of their religion with only a few conscious teachers and students attempting to help them out of their isolation.

These barriers need to be brought down. This includes the barriers based on ethnicity and those based on religion. Both are dangerous and can have an extremely adverse impact on the country. We are already seeing this impact as groups such as the TLP spread more hatred.

We welcome the efforts made to do so at some schools, including missionary schools set up in Youhanabad and other areas. But more effort and action is required. No act of violence against any person on the basis of his or her religion or ethnicity should be tolerated. Yet we hear of such actions even at elite education institutions of higher learning both in Punjab and other places.

A capitalist supernova?

By John Smith

Excerpted: "Are We Heading Towards a Capitalist Supernova?"
Global debt – of households, private firms and governments – reached a staggering \$305tn (244tn GBP) in 2021, up from \$83tn in 2000.

Furthermore, global debt now equals 355 per cent of global GDP, up from 120 per cent in 1980 and 230 per cent in 2000.

The events we are witnessing mirror the dynamic that kicked off our current phase of capitalism in the first place.

In 2021, debtors of all types handed \$10.2tn – 12 per cent of global GDP – in interest payments to their creditors. In comparison, the annual income of the poorest 50 per cent of humanity is just 8.5 per cent of GDP.

Global debt has grown twice as fast as global GDP since 1980 and is accelerating, while global GDP growth is slowing and threatening to go into reverse.

While global debt has rocketed, global interest rates have been in almost continual decline since 1980. So low have interest rates fallen since the global financial crisis of 2008 that, by 2021, \$17tn of bonds were trading at negative interest rates, even before inflation is taken into account. That's \$7tn more than the figure that astounded Bill Gross in 2016, referenced at the beginning of this article.

As a result, interest on

debt, as a share of GDP, is well below its peak at the beginning of the neoliberal era. The Economist calculates, for instance, that 27 per cent of US GDP was swallowed by interest payments in 1989, but only 12 per cent of it in 2021, despite the massive growth in US debt.

But the world of ever-lower interest rates has now come to an end. The decision of the US Federal Reserve on 15 June to hike interest rates by 0.75 per cent – the sharpest increase in nearly three decades, with the promise of more to come – sent shockwaves around the world and has wiped trillions of dollars off the values of stock and bond markets.

Any rise in interest rates means a huge shift of purchasing power from indebted households, firms and governments to their creditors. "The Economist" calculates that a 2 per cent increase in US interest rates in 2021 would, by 2026, double the share of global GDP absorbed by interest payments.

Decades of ever-lower interest rates have inflated what Nouriel Roubini, one of the few economists to predict the 2007-8 financial crash, famously called "the mother of all asset bubbles", eventually leading to a bust, another massive financial crisis, and a rapid slide into recession."

However, a bubble is insubstantial and delicate, and bursts with

barely a sound. A far more appropriate and useful metaphor is that of a star, which is immense, and dies in a stupendous explosion. As Bill Gross, the 'bond king', tweeted in 2016, "Global yields lowest in 500 years of recorded history. \$10 trillion of negative rate bonds. This is a supernova that will explode one day."

What has forced the Fed to aggressively raise its interest rate is the dramatic reappearance of a most feared monster: inflation. The events we are witnessing mirror the dynamic that kicked off our current phase of capitalism in the first place.

The neoliberal era was inaugurated in October 1979 by a huge hike in US interest rates aimed at quelling entrenched and rampant inflation. The "Volcker shock", as it became known (after Paul Volcker, then head of the US Federal Reserve), was likened by journalist Naomi Klein to "a giant Taser gun fired from Washington, sending the developing world into convulsions... Higher interest payments on foreign debts... could only be met by taking on more loans. The debt spiral was born."

This hike in interest rates succeeded in killing the inflation monster, but at the cost of a sharp recession in imperialist countries and a devastating debt crisis throughout Africa, Asia and Latin America. The debt crisis immiserated

millions and forced these nationally independent countries to submit to the dictates of the "Washington Consensus": wholesale privatisation, austerity and removal of obstacles to cross-border flows of capital and commodities (but not of people!).

Now the inflation monster has risen from the dead, prompting the Fed and other central banks to attempt to kill it again before it has had a chance to gain in strength. Thus the Bank for International Settlements, which provides banking services for the world's central banks, has called on them to "not be shy of inflicting short-term pain and even recessions to prevent any move to a persistently high-inflation world."

As a result, the debate has moved on from whether there will be a global recession to how severe it will be – and whether central banks really have the guts to carry out their threats and risk a global economic crash. Over the next 18 months we will find out.

Why did Bill Gross liken global bond markets to a star about to explode? What are the chances that his prediction may come to pass? What would such a cataclysmic event actually mean in practice?

A star is a production process, in which heavier elements are fused out of lighter elements, releasing huge amounts of energy. When the energy released by the fusion of lighter elements is insufficient to counter the gravity exerted by the growing mass of heavier elements, the star dies. It either ends its life as a burned-out cinder or, if it is big enough, in a supernova, an extremely violent implosion that incinerates anything in its vicinity and scatters debris throughout space.

Will the coming crash take the form of a brief recession, or a long and deep depression (as in the 1930s) or something many magnitudes worse?

Capitalism is also a production process, and the energy that fires it is living labour, performed by workers and farmers who produce more wealth than they consume. The surplus is converted into capital – that is, self-expanding wealth, wealth that must either make profits or shrivel and die. Capital, whether in the form of stocks and shares, bonds, real estate or fine wines, is, in the words of Karl Marx, "dead labour which, vampire-like, only lives by sucking living labour, and lives the more, the more labour it sucks".

As with a star, when the mass of accumulated capital exceeds the capacity of living labour to breathe life into it, the moment of crisis has arrived, and swathes of capital are destroyed in a financial crash. With the interest rate hikes, our moment of crisis has arrived. But will

we aren't stopping any time soon, we just might have more to offer. Mr Mohammad Ali Jinnah, eat your heart out.

Why are we slaves to formalities and to due process? Being a practising lawyer for the past three years, I have noticed that something that can be resolved in a month generally takes years due to following the 'correct procedure' which adheres to the 'laws' laid down by those who ruled us more than 100 years ago. Why is it that we're so rigid and inflexible that we will only go by the book? Why can't we just form a medical board of independent doctors and let them decide if Dua Zehra is of legal age to marry? Why is that court hearings go on for years and years until the claimants die?

Why is that we aren't utilising the wonders of science to decide a question as simple as decoding someone's age? But well, on the flip side, Dua Zehra's case is a massive win for the predators, the sick minded, the diabolical pedophiles and for everyone who wishes to go down the deepest pits of disgust and horror. Those who love to violate and fondle with no objection, the lonely souls with their emptiness fulfilled and the beings who crave the touch of young skin. No more do they

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Playing with dolls

Zorain Nizamani

Congratulations! We have made history. You can now freely marry an under-aged girl and legally get away with it. Bonus points, you might get the court to rule in your favour too. Our forefathers fought wars just to see us encourage (and dare I say legalise) underage marriages. Let your wildest and darkest thoughts adorn your interior, revel in all the possibilities that can further be explored. What's next, pedophilia?

It evades all logic how the courts function despite an ossification test showing a Dua Zehra's bone age to be 16 or 17; it is unfathomable how the honorable judge has gone as far as to say that she is free to live with whoever she wants to. I mean now that we're at it, why not legalise forced conversions too?

But where does the problem lie though? How is it that we, as reasonable citizens, can tell something's wrong. Why can't our Lords figure that out too? Dua Zehra is 16 or 17 and she's been allowed to marry and live with her 'husband'. Read that as many times as you want and try making peace with it. This is the best we've managed in 75 years of our country's existence and

we aren't stopping any time soon, we just might have more to offer. Mr Mohammad Ali Jinnah, eat your heart out.

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have to be left alone with their sanity, their primitive instinct does not require honing any more, because our system has allowed for you to marry a girl who is below 18. Yes, she can and will consent. No, you will not be questioned. We live in a free country.

And for all those who have the audacity to concur with the judgement of the court and those who have been abusing the rhetoric of 'let her live her life', I ask you, imagine your underage daughter elopes, will you still adopt this rhetoric and let her 'live her life' or will you try and protect her because: a) she is incapable of giving consent, and b) child marriages are illegal. Don't be a hypocrite.

I haven't put forth my opinions here in almost a month but the judgement in Dua Zehra's case was an eye opener and it required being dissected. It was a testament to how we're flogging a dead horse. The system has failed and there is absolutely no way it will improve, unless it's reconstructed from the root. I am short on words on how Dua has been allowed to 'go wherever she wants', it just sets a massively dangerous precedent.

Our children our calling out our name, they're screaming at the top of their lungs, can't you hear them?

How to break a vicious cycle [Part – II]

By Ishrat Husain

It goes without saying that political stability is the sine qua non for any sustained effort to achieve rapid and inclusive growth. The main drivers of such growth would be small farm agriculture, SMEs and microenterprises, construction and low-cost housing, tourism, IT and IT enabled services, diversification and value addition in exports.

Thus, the agenda proposed for the short, medium and long term should have a continuous chain, linking and consolidating the gains from these sectors and stimulating inter-sectoral synergistic impulses over time. Continuity of these policies beyond the electoral cycle is an absolute must. There are multiple pathways to attain this kind of growth but the preferred route to be chosen is the one that expands domestic productive capacity to meet the higher aggregate demand associated with rising per capita incomes, the relatively high propensity to create productive jobs and support livelihoods, alleviate poverty, and reduce interpersonal and regional inequality. Tough political decisions would be required from time to time. The time horizons described are not discrete as they would have spillovers but are continuous, interwoven in a chain that leads to the ultimate goal.

Short-term Agenda 2022-24: The revival of non-inflationary, sustained and inclusive growth would span a much longer time period. What is presented in the following paragraphs is what can possibly be done in the next two-and-a-half-year time period with great concerted effort. We are fully aware that there will be elections in 2023 but the commitment of all political parties to this agenda is to be secured.

For this, first, raise the investment-to-GDP ratio by two percentage points every year, reaching 20 per cent by 2024. Public-sector investment along with public-private partnership should not only be stepped up but its quality and composition should be able to crowd in private sector investment. Bank credit-to-GDP ratio, particularly in the fixed investment component, has remained dismally low compared to our neighbouring countries and has to be doubled from the current level. Private equity, development finance institutions, IPOs, and debt capital markets have to play a crucial role in financing private investment. Second, increase productivity of small and medium sized farmers – particularly in wheat, sugar, cotton, oilseeds, livestock products and pulses – improve marketing infrastructure, confine the role of government to strategic reserves for managing

demand supply gap, and maintain price stability. Provision of improved seed, fertiliser, pesticides, small agricultural implements through targeted subsidies along with water resource use efficiency and credit to small farmers who constitute two third of the total farms can boost the national yields of crops. Veterinary services and artificial insemination would do the same for dairy and livestock. It is paradoxical that a country with the largest irrigation system has to import food items and cotton amounting to almost \$10 billion. The impressive results in rice and maize crops show that government intervention in markets is to be avoided. R&D in the public sector needs to be integrated and coordinated.

Third, continue focused attention on the construction and housing sector and tourism which would create jobs, induce activity in the allied industries, assist micro, small and medium enterprises and help low-income families in acquiring houses and expanding tourist facilities in Gilgit-Baltistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the Makran Coast and Azad Jammu and Kashmir. The domestic cement industry is not only expanding in response to demand within the country but also because of economies of scale it is able to export. The Pakistan Steel Mills

has to be made fully operational under private sector lease arrangement and expanded to three million ton capacity and, along with performance linked incentives to manufacture quality products, will reduce dependence on imports. The engineering goods industry has remained stunted and should be incentivized to meet the local industrial demand or compete in international markets.

Fourth, broaden the FBR and provincial tax bases to attain tax-to-GDP ratio of 15 per cent (provincial taxes contributing three per cent from one per cent at present) through automation, data integration and data analytics, harmonization, new surveys and valuation of properties, track and trace system, and minimizing interaction between taxpayer and tax collector; gradually bring down the ratio of indirect taxes from 60 per cent of the total to 50 per cent; expedite income tax and sales tax refunds on the lines of FASTER without any human intervention at any stage in the process. Urban property tax is a huge potential that can be tapped if the powers to assess and collect this tax is devolved to municipal corporations. Cities like Karachi, Lahore, Islamabad and Faisalabad can generate five to six times more than the present levels if they carry out cadastral surveys, revalue properties

annually and impose heavy penalties on non-utilization of plots. Taxes on the agriculture income of large landowners and revision of irrigation charges can prove to be a remunerative source of income for the provinces and also ensure efficient use of water resources that are getting scarce. The reliance on indirect taxes on goods and services is highly regressive and it needs to be replaced by direct taxes on income (irrespective of the source), property, capital gains, assets and inheritance.

Fifth, revamp state-owned enterprises (SOEs) through restructuring, capital market sales, sales to strategic investors, mergers, liquidation, management contracts, public-private partnership to improve overall economic efficiency and maximize the returns to the exchequer. All the heads of these enterprises have to be recruited through an open competitive process and the candidates selected on the basis of merit, compensated well but held accountable for the results. The ministry heading this can set the performance agreements but not interfere in day-to-day operations. A comprehensive plan and strategy is already in place that has classified the commercial SOEs in two parts – those to be retained in public ownership for strategic or public

There is another Charsadda joke. Whenever any bearded man indulges in some irreverent or immoral behaviour, the oft-repeated joke is that he is exempt from any repercussions because he holds the licence for being ridiculous and immoral, which is an indirect refer-

Public display of chutzpah

Imran Jan

Growing up in Charsadda, as a young student we liked to repeat a joke every time we came across any man with a beard who would either drive his car carelessly or indulge in some ridiculous act. The joke was just four Pashto words but the story and history behind those words was common knowledge and so people understood the context everytime we uttered those words, which are Sheikh pa ghalata de. It translates literally as "the bearded one is in the wrong".

Attallah Tarar sports a beard and shaves his mustache. Muslim men do this keeping in line with the seriousness and depth of their faith. However, he has indulged in uncouth and irreligious behaviour. Fathers who may have asked their sons and daughters to keep watching and reading news so as to prepare for the CSS exam must have felt very uncomfortable watching this public display of an act, which is usually the stuff of adult entertainment.

There is another Charsadda joke. Whenever any bearded man indulges in some irreverent or immoral behaviour, the oft-repeated joke is that he is exempt from any repercussions because he holds the licence for being ridiculous and immoral, which is an indirect refer-

ence to his beard. It was a double-edged sword. One, anything the labeled pious did was right by default. Two, don't dare criticise the bearded ones as their self-righteous mindset is unstoppable and dangerous. Perhaps this second joke is more relevant here. Because we have kind of forgotten that the same Atta Tarar some weeks ago openly threatened anyone who may dare call him a lota.

Public display of disrespect or profanity toward any faith or God is regarded as blasphemous. The people who adhere to the faith that is targeted by the blasphemy feel humiliated and resentful. One could argue that faith is a sacred as well as a private matter because it is one human's connection and contract with his Creator. We can disagree with an act of blasphemy but we are not to judge someone's actions or validity of their faith because that work is reserved for our Creator.

An elected or a government official takes oath of office to protect a document where the rights of the people are enshrined. That is a contract between the official and the state as well as the people. Disgracing the Holy Book is wrong and immoral but that is for the Creator to punish not us because that is a violation of the relationship between man and his Creator. Disgracing the sacred document called the Constitution is

a violation of the contract made with the people. Even the Holy Book emphasises on the rights of the people more than on the rights our Creator has over us. It is called Huguoq-ul-ibaad i.e. the rights of the people.

The bearded spokesperson of the Punjab government has openly displayed filthy profanity for the very document, which enshrines the rights the people have over him as a government official. It is not the violation of a specific right but rather the wholesale mockery of whatever rights the people may think they have.

Perhaps, this public display of chutzpah is coming from a greater belief of impunity. This middle finger is not only a mockery of the supposedly sacred document but also an indication of massive support from those who are usually in the business of raising the finger as a third umpire. Speaking of which, there was a lot of noise when Imran Khan some years ago had said that the third umpire had raised his finger. Somehow, there is not much noise at this finger raising as if it is some sort of a halal finger.

The violation of the Constitution used to be benignly labeled as "Doctrine of Necessity". That is obsolete now because now our politicians just middle finger the Constitution. Ah, those good ol' days!

First China-Pakistan dual degree program will be launched soon: Dr. Mukhtar

ISLAMABAD: "The Higher Education Commission (HEC) is formulating and improving the policy for dual degree programs in Pakistan. I look forward to the first China-Pakistan dual degree program officially approved by HEC which will be launched at Karakoram International University".

This was stated by Mukhtar Ahmed, Chairman of Pakistan's HEC in a meeting with a delegation from Tang International Education Group led by Director & Executive President Max Ma, according to China Economic Net (CEN).

There are 57 universities and colleges in Pakistan that are committed to vocational education. In the future, more will be transformed into vocational institutes.

It is expected that the first China-Pakistan dual degree program officially approved by HEC will be launched at Karakoram International University to train talent in mining engineering, which will become a model for other Pakistani universities in providing more practical knowledge and experience in cooperation with Chinese universities.

HEC Chairman added, that the Commission highly values the role of vocational education in training and developing skillful technical talents in Pakistan to meet future needs. He expects that more Chinese disciplines will continue to be introduced to Pakistan through the program to enhance the local vocational and technical education capacity.

Among the over 700 vocational education majors in China, Tang International Education Group has select-

ed 210 most needed ones to be introduced to Pakistan under "CCTE" model.

"CCTE", short for "China-Pakistan Dual Diploma/Degree & China-Pakistan Cooperation, Chinese Language Courses & Chinese Commercial Cultural Courses, Technical Education Subjects & Technology in Education and Further Education & Employment", is a model developed by the education group. Students participating in CCTE programs will learn in Pakistan for the first two years and in China for the third year before obtaining degrees from both sides.

Since officially launched in Pakistan in May 2021, Tang International Education Group has been facilitating Pakistan-China vocational education cooperation at a fast pace.

In Sindh, Government Monotechnic Institute (GMI), Mehrabpur became the first in the province in June this year to jointly provide training on electric engineering in collaboration with Yantai Vocational College.

Earlier in May, Government Polytechnic Institute Dadu partnered with Hebei Professional College of Politics Science and Law to train computer information technology talents.

In KP, Pak-Austria Fachhochschule Institute of Applied Sciences and Technology has signed an MoU with Chengdu University, China. Last December, Polytechnic Institutes in Allama Iqbal and Taxila, and the University of Faisalabad inaugurated China-Pakistan International College respectively with Shenzhen Institute of Information Technology (SZIT), Guangdong Construction Polytechnic and Bailie Vocational College. INP



QUETTA – Balochistan Parliamentary Secretary for Minority Affairs Khalil George addressing on the ceremony in connection with World Minority Day.

Pakistan, Turkiye ink Preferential Trade Agreement

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Turkiye on Friday inked the Preferential Trade Agreement aimed at boosting trade in goods between the two countries.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif witnessed the inking of the PTA at a ceremony held here at the PM Office, as the visiting Turkish Trade Minister Dr. Mehmet Mus and Minister for Commerce Syed Naveed Qamar signed the accord.

Commonly known as Trade in Goods Pact, the PTA includes comprehensive provisions on bilateral safeguards, balance of payment exceptions, dispute settlement, and periodic review of the agreement.

Prime Minister Sharif in his remarks termed the agreement "a great moment and a milestone" in the brotherly and historic relations between Pakistan and Turkiye.

He recalled that following his official visit to Turkiye in May, the untiring efforts of the ministries of both sides resulted in the signing of the agreement.

He said immense business opportunities existed between the two countries and expressed confidence that the accord would further explore the trade avenues in diverse sectors.

The prime minister said Pakistan would continue to work with Turkiye on strengthening bilateral ties.

Trade Minister Dr Mehmet Mus said the occasion marked a significant milestone which would contribute in a long way to further strengthening and expansion of trade ties.

He said meeting expectations of all stakeholders was not easy, however added that dedication and step-by-step measures led to conclusion of the accord.

He thanked PM Shehbaz Sharif for his leadership to seal the agreement for the betterment of the two countries and enhancing linkages between their business communities.

Syed Naveed Qamar hoped the PTA between Pakistan and Turkey would open up new opportunities to boost bilateral trade across various sectors.

He said Pakistan also looked forward to working towards materializing a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with Turkiye.

He stressed the need to increase business-to-business interaction for strengthening trade and investment relations between the brotherly countries.

The key highlights of the trade concessions offered by both sides under the Agreement are as follows: (i) Turkiye had offered concessions to Pakistan on 261 Tariff Lines, which include key items of Pakistan's export interest to Turkiye from both agriculture and the industrial sectors. INP

Hamza files review appeal against SC decision in Punjab CM election case

LAHORE: Former Chief Minister Punjab Hamza Shahbaz on Friday filed a petition in the Supreme Court (SC), praying to the court to review its July 26, 2022 decision in which it had declared the Punjab Assembly (PA) deputy speaker's ruling in the election for Punjab chief minister null and void.

Advocate Mansoor Ali Awan submitted the petition on Hamza's behalf. In the petition, CM Pervaiz Elahi and former deputy speaker Dost Muhammad Mazari have been made parties in the case.

The SC had on July 26, 2022 annulled the ruling given by the then Punjab Assembly deputy speaker Dost Mazari in the run-off election for the Punjab CM.

On July 22, Mazari had rejected the votes of Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid (PML-Q) members of the Punjab Assembly (MPAs) in the favour of Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi during the provincial chief minister election citing a letter from PML-Q's head Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain under Article 63-A of the constitution.

The apex court, in its 11-page short order, accepted the plea of Elahi and pronounced him as Punjab chief minister. INP

Stocks gain 386 points on rupee appreciation

ISLAMABAD: The benchmark KSE-100 index reversed its losses on Friday on the back of the rupee's strong recovery and expected inflows.

According to the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) website, the benchmark index had gained 386.33 points, or 0.91 per cent, by 12:26 pm to reach 42,629.66 points.

On Thursday, stocks snapped a five-day rally due to political noise and a hike in the power tariff.

However, the stocks started reversing losses shortly after trading opened today.

Ahsan Mehanti of Arif Habib Corporation said stocks showed "sharp recovery" on the rupee's appreciation and Finance Minister Miftah Ismail's statement that the United Arab Emirates would invest \$1 billion in the PSX.

Head of Research at Intermarket

Securities Raza Jafri said the rupee's continued strengthening and news of the letter of intent being received from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) are leading the stock market higher.

He was referring to a report published a section of the press which quoted finance ministry officials as saying that they expected an agreement on the letter of intent "any time soon".

Earlier today, the local currency jumped by Rs3.28 against the dollar in the interbank market to reach Rs215.6.

Director of First National Equities Limited Amir Shehzaad also shared a similar view. He said a bullish trend could be seen after the improvement in the rupee's value, and investors were prioritising energy stocks. Shehzaad said the bullish momentum could continue into next week, adding that if the IMF tranche was received. INP

Angry residents attack KE office over prolonged loadshedding

KARACHI: Frustrated by prolonged and unannounced loadshedding, angry residents of Sachal Goth marched towards the K-Electric (KE) office and attacked it.

According to details, residents of Sachal Goth marched towards the K-Electric (KE) office located at the Madaris Chowk and attacked it.

The protestors pelted stones at the KE office and broke windows of its vehicles. On their way to the office, the protestors also burnt tyres against the prolonged loadshedding.

Meanwhile, residents of Gulshan-e-Hadeed has also staged a protest in front of the K-electric office over unannounced and prolonged power outages. The protestors, including traders and women, chanted slogans against the government and KE.

Meanwhile, the Gulshan-e-Hadeed police reached the scene and told the protesters to disperse. However, they refused to end the protest. INP

Harmful novel tobacco products are a threat to Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: The Society for the Protection of the Rights of the Child (SPARC) organised an event titled "Independence from tobacco" to celebrate International Youth Day 2022.

The Speakers shed light on the importance of banning novel tobacco products and highlighted that these products are biggest threats for younger generations as tobacco industry is finding new ways of manipulating our youth. Studded with false advertisement and carcinogens (cancer causing chemicals), these products are presented as nicotine pouches, gums and lozenges.

Dr. Shazia Sobia Aslam Soomro, Parliamentary Secretary, Federal Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations & Coordination (NHSR&C) said Pakistan is lucky to have a majority of population in youth; 61 million of youngsters are an asset for our country and the government realizes that. We will not let any industry deliberately target our youth to put their future in jeopardy. She appreciated SPARC for educating the youth on malicious practices and harmful products and also giving youth a platform to share their stories with policymakers. She also assured to raise voice in parliament for legislation regarding novel products.

Mirza Nasir Ud Din Mashhood Ahmad, Special Secretary, Federal Ministry of NHSR&C expressed concerns that 1200 children beginning smoking daily and 170,000 people dying due to tobacco induced diseases every year. He stated that the tobacco control cell at the ministry is active and we encourage parliamentarians, civil society, academia and media to collaborate with us in countering the sales and promotion of emerging tobacco products to children and youth. Malik Imran Ahmed, Country Head, Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids (CTFK), mentioned that in order to attract youth, tobacco industry is engaging youth icons such as famous musicians, actors and models for paid social media content. The extensive online campaigns on almost all social media platforms are also a proof that these products are targeted at youth. INP

Police arrest two nominated suspects in Layyah gang rape

MULTAN: Police on Friday claimed to have arrested two suspects in a case involving gang-rape of a girl who was also filmed during the horrific episode in Layyah.

Police while sharing details of investigations in the gang-rape case said that seven suspects were nominated in the case and they have so far arrested two of them.

The spokesman for Punjab police said raids are being carried out to arrest the other suspects. "We have also sent samples of the victim to the forensic lab for the DNA," they said.

It has been reported previously that the father of the girl has approached the local police claiming that nearly a dozen suspects took her daughter to an unidentified place near the Thal Medical College on August 5 at gunpoint, gang-raped and tortured her and shot the footage of the gruesome incident.

The Layyah police registered a case and formed police teams to arrest the suspects. INP

Pakistan says UNSC has become 'cloistered', calls for improving its working methods

UNITED NATIONS: A senior Pakistani diplomat has called for restructuring the UN Security Council's "penholder system" that gives a Council member control over the agenda and drafting of a resolution.

He said the 15-member body was being used by some for geopolitical reasons, putting into question its role to act "on behalf of all UN member states".

"Penholder system in essence enables the holder of the pen to take leadership over a situation on the agenda of the Council and to control the structure and core content of a resolution that does not represent the view of UN's wider membership," Ambassador Amir Khan, acting permanent representative to the UN, said, while citing the August 2021 incident when India, as the Security Council

President, denied Pakistan an opportunity to address the Council as a neighbouring country with a direct stake in peace in Afghanistan.

"Such was the case of Security Council's meeting on Afghanistan last year when the President of the Council prevented Pakistan from participating in the Council meeting despite all other members of the Council agreeing to Pakistan's participation at that meeting," he told delegates in an Arria-Formula meeting, convened by Russia, on Thursday.

The format is named after a former Venezuelan ambassador to the UN, Diego Arriva. It is a very informal consultation process which affords members of the Security Council the opportunity to hear persons in a confidential, informal setting. INP

Argentinian Rear Admiral appointed as chief of UNMOGIP

UNITED NATIONS: Rear Admiral Guillermo Pablo Rios of Argentina has been appointed as Head of Mission and Chief Military Observer for the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP), which monitors the Line of Control (LoC) in the disputed Jammu and Kashmir, it was officially announced Thursday.

As per the UN announcement, Rear Admiral Rios succeeds Major General Jose Eladio Alcain of Uruguay, who will shortly complete his assignment.

UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres, who announced the appointment, said he was grateful to Major General Alcain for his contribution to United Nations peace-keeping efforts.

Rear Admiral Rios has had a distinguished career in the Argentinean Navy since 1988, when he graduated from the Navy Academy as Middleshipman, according to the UN. Most recently, he served as the General Director of Education, Training and Doctrine of the Joint Staff (2022). Prior to this, he was Marines Infantry Commander (Corps Commander) (2020-2021), Marines Infantry Fleet Commander (Brigade Commander) (2019), Education Department Chief, Navy Warfare School (2018), and Defence, Military, Naval and Air Attaché in the Russian Federation (2016-2018).

He was a Training Officer in a US Marine Corps Regiment under a US and Argentine Marines Exchange Programme (2002-2003). INP

India troops targeting youth to suppress Kashmiris' struggle

ISLAMABAD: The Indian troops, under black laws, are openly targeting, arresting and killing innocent Kashmiri youth during cordon and search operations and fake encounters across the territory to suppress the Kashmiris' ongoing struggle for securing their right to self-determination.

According to a report released by Kashmir Media Service on the occasion of International Youth Day, today, Indian forces are brutally murdering Kashmiri youth for demanding their just rights, including the right to self-determination and plebiscite, under the supervision of the United Nations. It said, the world is commemorating International Youth Day but youth in the occupied territory are being targeted, killed and arrested under black laws by Indian troops and police personnel on a daily basis. The report pointed out that the Indian troops had intensi-

sified fake encounters and extra-judicial killings of Kashmiri youth in so-called cordon and search operations since 5th August 2019 when Modi-led fascist Indian government repealed its special status and imposed military siege in the territory.

It said that the Indian troops martyred 146 Kashmiri youth and arrested over 800 this year while over 96,100 Kashmiris, mostly youth, had fallen to the Indian bullets since 1989 till date in IIOJK.

"Modi-led Indian regime must understand that no amount of brutalization, military might and anti-Kashmiri policy will be able to subjugate the Kashmiris. India can kill Kashmiri youth but it cannot defeat their stand and sentiment on Kashmir resolution. The Kashmiri youth are determined to continue their struggle till complete success," it added. INP

Imran Ismail moves SHC against FIA notice in prohibited funding case

KARACHI: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader and former Sindh governor Imran Ismail on Friday moved Sindh High Court (SHC) against FIA's notice in a prohibited funding case.

Imran Ismail was summoned by FIA to probe into PTI foreign funding case after the ECP announced its verdict.

The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) has become active after the ECP verdict and had summoned several PTI leaders for the probe.

Thursday, the Peshawar High Court (PHC) stopped the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) from investigating former National Assembly Speaker Asad Qaiser in the prohibited funding case. The ECP bench in its reserved verdict said prohibited funding against PTI had been proven. INP



QUETTA – Provincial President Minorities' Alliance and other cutting cake in connection with celebrate 75 Independence Day on 14 August.

ADB calls for railways policy reforms

ISLAMABAD: The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has identified six policy reforms to strengthen the railway system in Pakistan and across the Central Asian Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) region.

It said that railways across the region must consider implementing key reforms that would make them more efficient and financially sustainable.

A new study by the ADB assesses the state of CAREC railways and identifies opportunities for investment, commercialisation, and reform.

By implementing key reforms, railways across the region can help increase economic growth and improve the lives of ordinary people.

According to the study, Pakistan Railways has 466 locomotives and 16,159 freight wagons. Of them, 23% of locomotives and 24% of wagons are unserviceable.

The study read that most of the regional railways currently use accounting systems that do not follow internationally recognised commercial standards. "These old systems cannot accurately measure the true financial per-

formance of railway entities or separate the financial performance of each business activity," it added.

The region's railways must develop modern commercial accounting systems that provide reliable and transparent real-time information about costs, revenues, and financial performance. Strengthening staff expertise in operating the system and using it to analyse railway performance is also crucial.

Furthermore, railways need to introduce enterprise resource planning systems to help them adopt more commercial approaches that would increase productivity and profitability.

"These systems also help railway planners to maintain an overview of existing railway resources such as staff or rolling stock and determine more efficient ways of using them," the study read. "They can be used to determine the full cost of operating railway services and routes, which is necessary to optimise tariff levels and understand which routes are most profitable. They are used to monitor and improve productivity and asset utilisation, and ultimately increase profitability," it added. INP

Opening Remarks for the Press Briefing by Foreign Office Spokesperson

ISLAMABAD: Let me begin by recalling the solemn observance of Yum-e-Istehsal on 5th August. The day was observed across the Pakistan to denounce the third year of Indian military siege of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) in the wake of India's illegal and unilateral actions of 5 August 2019 and subsequent measures aimed at undermining the internationally recognized disputed status of Jammu and Kashmir, and to alter the demographic structure of the occupied territory. It was an occasion to reaffirm the nation's unwavering support for the just struggle of the Kashmiri people for their right to self-determination. The Indian Charge d'Affaires (Cd'A) was called to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and conveyed the Government of Pakistan's unequivocal rejection of India's illegal and unilateral actions, which were in complete violation of the UNSC resolutions on Jammu and Kashmir, international law, and the 4th Geneva

Convention.

A Solidarity Walk initiated from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was led by Foreign Secretary Sohail Mahmood, Khawaja Muhammad Asif, Minister of Defence and Qamar Zaman Kaira, Special Advisor to the Prime Minister on Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit Baltistan joined the walk, and also addressed the participants.

The President, Prime Minister and Foreign Minister sent out messages of solidarity. Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari addressed a comprehensive letter to the President of the UN Security Council, President of the UN General Assembly, UN Secretary-General, and the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and a separate letter to the OIC Secretary-General regarding the alarming situation in IIOJK. It was pointed out that, in accordance with UNSC resolution 122 (1957), all the unilateral actions taken by India on and after 5 August 2019 were not only illegal but, ipso facto, null and void. INP



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate, Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani exchanging views with Ambassador of Brazil Olyntho Vieira at Parliament House.